

our children learn the basics before being promoted to the next grade. This is crucial to our country's social and economic well-being.

A talented and dedicated teacher must be in every classroom. Creativity and innovation in public education must be encouraged, while still holding them accountable for results. Every classroom and library should be connected to the Internet so all students can be computer literate and be prepared for the 21st century.

Finally, we need to make sure our schools are healthy places to learn. Next week I intend to introduce legislation to improve air quality in our Nation's school buildings based on an existing Environmental Protection Agency program. Our children must have a healthy learning environment.

Let us make the commitment not only to our children but also to the future of this great Nation, and make education our number one priority.

SIGNING THE DISCHARGE PETITION TO ALLOW DEBATE ON THE PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

(Mr. HOLT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, today many of us are signing the discharge petition to bring a Patients' Bill of Rights to the floor for free and open debate. I know the American public want it. I certainly know my constituents want it.

They want a restoration of the doctor-patient relationship so that doctors can determine medical necessity, so that doctors and their patients can make the medical decisions, so that health care plans are held accountable for their medical decisions or lack of decisions.

I am certainly proud that I have able to take the first legislative action in the Congress on the subject by introducing in subcommittee an amendment to hold health care plans accountable for their medical decisions.

The leadership has been holding the American public in the waiting room. This discharge petition will allow us to get out of the waiting room and get the health care that we Americans deserve.

WHAT A DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY IN CONGRESS WOULD MEAN

(Mr. REYNOLDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, not counting social security, the Congressional Budget Office or CBO projects an \$824 billion in budget surpluses over the next 10 years. Again, that is not counting the temporary surplus in the social security trust fund.

Guess what the Democrats are planning to do with the surplus. Well, if the statements by the President, the House Minority Leader, and the Minority Leader in the other body are any indication, we might be surprised to learn that what they want to do is take this surplus and raise taxes; Members have heard that right, raise taxes, not cut them.

Many people in Washington are shaking their heads over the recent statements by Democratic Party leaders, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) and Mr. DASCHLE. The gentleman from Missouri said earlier this month while in Ann Arbor, Michigan, unbelievably, that he would consider cutting defense and raising taxes in order to expand Washington's role in our schools.

Now we have a Democratic leader in the other body who stated on CNN's Evans and Novak that tax increases were "on the table." I guess there is really no need to ask what a Democrat majority in Congress would mean.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KINGSTON). Members must be reminded to not make reference to statements off the floor of Members of the other body.

DEMOCRATS TAKE THE NEXT STEP TOWARD REAL PATIENT PROTECTIONS

(Mr. MENENDEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, today Democrats take the next step in the long, arduous road to real patient protections, despite the fact that Republicans continue to construct roadblocks to meaningful managed care reform.

Republicans will claim that they are moving managed care reform through the committee process, but what they will not tell us is that these so-called reforms lack meaning and enforcement.

The American people deserve more than empty promises and rhetoric. They deserve to choose their doctor. They deserve access to specialists. They deserve to have doctors, not health care bureaucrats, making their vital medical decisions. Most importantly, they deserve legal remedies to hold their health plans accountable.

The Democratic Patients' Bill of Rights provides these guarantees. Republicans are up to the same old tricks again this year. They will not even allow us to bring the Democratic Patients' Bill of Rights to a debate here on the floor for the American people to listen and ultimately for all of us to vote on.

Last year, protecting their special interests, they narrowly defeated the real patient protections Democrats pushed to the floor. Then realizing that we represented the views of Americans across this country, they put forth a watered down proposal to try to detract from the real issues.

Again this year Republicans are doing the same thing. This discharge petition should serve as a wake-up call to Republicans that Americans want real patient protections and they want it now.

REAL REFORM FOR THE TAX CODE

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, oftentimes people come up to me and say, the politicians are always talking about reforming the Tax Code, getting rid of the Tax Code, making it easier to file our taxes, but nothing ever changes. How come that is?

The short answer is that the special interests benefit from the Tax Code, and the complexity of the Tax Code is a source of enormous government power. Thus, it would not be in the interests of anyone who wants to expand government power to change the Tax Code in a more sane direction.

Another reason is equally valid. It is called Tax Code progressivity. Any attempt to change the Tax Code into something that made sense, that actually looked like it was designed on purpose, would be met with howls of protests from the liberals. They would say it was unfair because it would undermine progressivity.

A flat tax, one rate, meaning that the more you make the more taxes you pay, is already a system that is fair and that makes high earners pay their fair share. A sales tax would also be fair.

In my view, if Members are against the flat tax or the sales tax, all the talk about reforming the Tax Code is simply empty rhetoric.

THE HOUSE MUST ADDRESS CERTAIN DISTURBING TRENDS IN GUN VIOLENCE

(Mr. BLAGOJEVICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BLAGOJEVICH. Mr. Speaker, among the disturbing trends in America relating to gun violence are those loopholes where teenagers and criminals can get guns at gun shows. This House has yet to address this issue.

Another dangerous trend is the increasing availability of military-style weapons to the civilian market. Examples of these are laser sights, high-capacity ammunition clips, and the 50-caliber sniper rifle.

Mr. Speaker, the 50-caliber sniper rifle is among the most destructive and powerful weapons available today. It fires armor-piercing ammunition. It was designed to take out armored personnel, helicopters, and concrete bunkers. It was used in the Gulf War. It has a range of up to 4 miles. You can shoot one of these from the Capitol and hit the Washington Monument with accuracy. It is 5 feet long and weighs over 28 pounds. You do not need it for hunting, yet you can buy it legally. It is less regulated than handguns, and it ought to be available only if you are in the military fighting a war.

Mr. Speaker, this House must address this issue immediately.

A TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM RONEY, A TENNESSEE HERO, AND A PLEA FOR CONGRESS TO DEBATE AND PASS MEANINGFUL LEGISLATION

(Mr. FORD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to rise and pay tribute to a young man in my district, a hero in my district, William Roney, who just recently on Sunday, June 20, alerted families in a Park Estates apartment in East Memphis Park in my district of a fire that had developed and which eventually consumed portions, large portions of the building.

Because of his actions, he certainly could have driven right by and made a phone call, but he jumped out of his car, knocked on doors, waved and yelled, and got all the families out of this building. It is my hope that those in my community will certainly pay the type of respects and certainly honor him in a way that he deserves.

I would say to my colleagues here in the Congress, we have heard a lot of talk this morning about guns and HMO reform and campaign finance. I would hope my colleagues, particularly on this side of the aisle and even on my side of the aisle, would realize that all we have really done in this Congress is pass a bunch of suspension bills. We fly back on Monday evenings and Tuesday evenings to vote on naming Post Offices and other Federal buildings.

HMO reform, people are crying out for it. Campaign finance reform, people are crying out for it. People want some action on guns, maybe not what we want, maybe not what the other side wants, but people want something. Let us rise up and do what the American people have elected us to do: not pass suspension bills, but pass meaningful legislation.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND RELATED AGENCIES ACT, 2000

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 218 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 218

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the house resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2084) making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. Points of order against consideration of the bill for failure to comply with clause 4(c) of rule XIII or section 401(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived except as follows: page 10, line 16, through page 13, line 13; "Notwithstanding any other provision of law," on page 13, line 16; "Notwithstanding any other provision of law," on page 15, line 20; "Notwithstanding any other provision of law," on page 17, line 14; "Notwithstanding any other provision of law," on page 18, line 4; "Notwithstanding any other provision of law," on page 19, line 5; "Notwithstanding any other provision of law," on page 19, line 25; "Notwithstanding any other provision of law," on page 25, line 9; "Notwithstanding any other provision of law," on page 32, line 8; page 50, lines 1 through 9; page 50, line 22, through page 51, line 12; and page 52, lines 1 through 10. Where points of order are waived against part of a paragraph, points of order against a provision in another part of such paragraph may be made only against such provision and not against the entire paragraph. The amendment printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution may be offered only by a Member designated in the report and only at the appropriate point in the reading of the bill, shall be considered as read, and shall not be subject to amendment. Points of order against the amendment printed in the report for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived. During consideration of the bill for further amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. The chairman of the Committee of the Whole may: (1) postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment; and (2) reduce to five minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any postponed question that follows another electronic vote without intervening business, provided that the minimum time for electronic voting on the first in any series of

questions shall be 15 minutes. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HEFLEY). The gentleman from New York (Mr. REYNOLDS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for purposes of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 218 is an open rule that governs the consideration of H.R. 2084, the Department of Transportation and related agencies appropriations bill for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000.

The rule waives clause 4(c) of rule 13 requiring a 3-day availability of printed hearings on a general appropriations bill, and section 401(a) of the Congressional Budget Act prohibiting consideration of legislation containing contract authority not subject to appropriation against consideration of the bill.

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The rule also provides for 1 hour of general debate to be equally divided between the chairman and the ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations.

In addition, the rule waives clause 2 of rule XXI, prohibiting unauthorized or legislative provisions in an appropriations bill, against provisions in the bill, except as otherwise specified in the rule.

The rule waives clause 2 of rule XXI against the amendment printed in the report accompanying this resolution, which may be offered only by a Member designated in the report and at the appropriate point in the reading of the bill, shall be considered as read, and shall not be subject to amendment.

Mr. Speaker, the rule authorizes the Chair to accord priority in recognition to Members who have preprinted their amendments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Further, the rule allows the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole to postpone votes during consideration of the bill, and to reduce votes to 5 minutes on a postponed question if the vote follows a 15-minute vote.

Finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, this bill provides for the appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000.